

Caravan Visit to Sheffield

Thanks to Pauline Park for putting pen to paper and writing this review of our November 2018 city break to Sheffield.

A city break just an hour from home may seem an unusual choice but Roger knew that we were in for a treat. Nine of us met at an unearthly hour at Paragon Station, on a damp morning in November to explore the delights of Sheffield.

The format was brilliant. Roger did all the work, booking the train tickets and the hotel, providing a programme of events, places to visit and eat and even timetables for local transport. Then it was left to us to decide what we wanted to do and when.

We left our luggage at the Premier Inn and set off on our adventure. Trams featured throughout our wanderings and were so efficient.

During our three days we toured the impressive, revitalised city centre and the Millenium Square, ate at lively restaurants, including Mamas & Leones and Egos, and visited the beautiful Lyceum theatre and the Curzon Blog cinema.

The play, *The Messiah*, described as an hilarious Nativity, didn't quite live up to our expectations. Hugh Dennis (*Outnumbered*) and John Marquez (*Doc Martin*) worked frantically and brilliantly in their roles, Lesley Garrett sang her heart out but unfortunately it didn't work for us.

The Curzon Blog, an old bank, refurbished as a cinema in great style, was in a dark, rather dubious looking street but inside was something special. The basement still housed the original bank but we four had a private viewing of *The Nutcracker* and the *Four Realms* in such comfort that some fell asleep despite the film being well worth seeing!

A really interesting morning at Kelham Island Museum told the story of the development of Sheffield through its industry, particularly steel making, and we had the pleasure of seeing the mighty River Don engine in steam.

The two Cathedrals were majestic in their central positions and deserved longer visits, as did the Graves Art Gallery. The Winter Garden was visited twice, not just because of the warmth it offered, the impressive structure housed quality craft units, an art gallery and a delicious café, as well as its plants.

We've saved our favourite jaunt until last- a ride around the Peak District in a 1929 Model A Ford car. It didn't start well as we arrived too early at the Edale station where we were to meet Roger's group returning from their car trip. It was raining and we needed a coffee. The station café was closed, the pub wouldn't serve us as it was too early, the rangers at the YHA were holding a meeting, with drinks in hand, but said they were closed, too. Finally, we found Champion House, a Christian activity centre who took pity on us. Four chairs were brought to their entrance hall, followed by coffees and biscuits. We must have looked an odd group, but what kindness and true Christian endeavour. Soon we were in the car, with hot water bottles and fur blankets provided by our driver, Steve, Mr Toad's lookalike in dress and with a fount of knowledge. What an adventure, whizzing along narrow, Peak District lanes, horn tooting, walkers waving and smiling at the 'old dears' on board. Gill's newly purchased M&S hat blew away, never to be seen again, and we never stopped laughing.

All good things come to an end so we finished our adventure in Bakewell, eating yet again. It was a super trip; three very full days that left those who had not been before, determined to visit Sheffield again. Many thanks, Roger, from the four septuagenarians who were amused to see themselves described as 'the four girls' in your programme.